

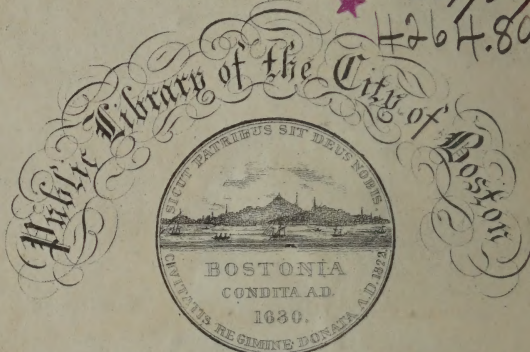


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By Rev. Jas. W. Ward

Received June 27, 1866. No. 74831

Slavery a Sin that concerns non-slaveholding States.

A

SERMON

DELIVERED ON THE DAY OF THE

ANNUAL FAST IN MASSACHUSETTS,

MARCH 28, 1839.

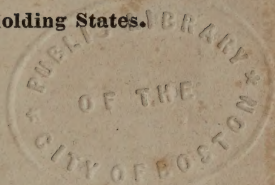
BY JAMES W. WARD,

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S E R M O N.

Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?—Isaiah lviii. 6.

THE children of Israel, on their days of fasting, were required, by God, as an evidence of the sincerity of their penitence, “to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke.” And may not a God of justice make the same requisition of us, on this anniversary day of fasting and prayer? Are we not guilty of holding in servitude our brethren of the human family? And may not God with the utmost propriety require us, on this day of solemn assembly, to manifest the sincerity of our repentance by breaking every yoke, and letting the oppressed go free? I shall now endeavor to prove that the system of American slavery is a sin; and, that it is a system of iniquity which very intimately concerns the inhabitants of non-slaveholding States.

I. Slavery is a sin. This is very generally denied by those who practise it. But that such persons should deny it to be a sin, is nothing strange. As long as they are determined to practise it, they must make this denial, or else stand out before the community as a body of men whose daily conduct is directly at war with the sober dictates of their own consciences. Still, however, they could not make the denial without, at least, some appearance of truth on their side. And it may be fully admitted, that the *legal* relation of master and slave may possibly exist, and yet the master not be culpable for its existence. This relation is one which is established entirely by the power of human legislation. The system of slavery is a creature of law. Repeal the laws that give birth and breath to the

monster, and it is annihilated at once. Now the laws which create it, may exist, not only without the support and sanction of a man who lives under them, but in direct opposition to his wishes. And they may establish, between him and some of his colored brethren of the human family, the relation of master and slave, without his consent, and even without his knowledge. He might, weeks and months before he was apprized of the fact, become the legal heir to an inheritance of enslaved flesh and blood, and might thus, in the eye of the law, sustain a relation which he utterly abhorred. Now, as all sin may be traced ultimately to the will, and as no involuntary act can possess a moral character, the man who should thus involuntarily become a slaveholder, could not, for becoming so, be guilty. He would be constituted a slaveholder by the law, and not by his own voluntary act; and the guilt of establishing the relation would rest, not on himself, but on those who made, or those who sustained the law. Still, whenever he *voluntarily assumed* the relation, he would be guilty. Whenever he voluntarily regarded those, whom the law styled his slaves, as his property, bound through life to do service to him, he would be guilty of slaveholding; for he would then, by an act of his own, sanction and confirm the relation which the law had created. He would be, not an unwilling, but a voluntary slaveholder. He might innocently regard them, not as his property, but as members of the great family of man, cast by the hand of Providence upon his care, and dependent, to some considerable extent, for freedom and happiness, upon his conduct; and he might sustain towards them the legal relation of master, till he was able, by removing them to a free state, or in some other way, compatible with their own best good, to secure to them the privileges of freemen. But if he voluntarily detained them in bondage an hour longer than a regard to their best good obliged him to do it, he would draw down on his soul all the guilt of slaveholding.

Again,—not only may a man be a legal slaveholder without *contracting* any stain of guilt, but he may also be a voluntary and cordial slaveholder without *feeling* on his conscience the *pressure* of guilt.

Mankind may often mistake the path of duty. Their

understandings may be so darkened by a selfish heart, as to call evil good and good evil. So was it with the Apostle Paul when, in persecuting the church of Christ, he verily thought that he did God service. And, no doubt, a man may think that in holding his fellow-men in bondage he is doing God service, for there is no act, however criminal, which a man may not be under such strong delusion as to deem pleasing in the eye of Heaven. Now, it may seem strange to charge a man with guilt for doing that of which his conscience approves. But in this case, the language we use is the language of common life, and is not metaphysically correct. He is, properly, guilty only for being actuated by a selfish motive, and if his motive is benevolent in holding his fellow-men in slavery, he cannot, for that specific act, be charged with guilt, even although the act may be one which is really fitted to injure the best interests of the community. Still, as all men would know what actions are injurious to the general welfare, were it not for the selfishness of their hearts, as they have consciences which would always lead them aright, were it not that they have resisted, and abused, and darkened their consciences,—he would be guilty for that selfishness which had blinded his understanding, and perverted his conscience. He would be guilty for *being a slaveholder*, although his guilt would not be traced to the exercise of selfishness in the specific voluntary act of holding his fellow-men in chains, but to the exercise of selfishness in those previous acts by which his understanding and conscience were darkened and defiled.

It is, moreover, very possible for a person to suppose slaveholding right, and yet, in practising it, to be influenced by sheer selfishness. He may not deem himself guilty of a wrong, and for this plain reason, he has never searched after the motives of his conduct. Would he look within, and examine the motives by which he is actuated, he might ascertain that they are entirely selfish in their character, and might be led to conclude that, whatever the practice of slaveholding may be in others, in himself it is certainly criminal. The advocate of slavery may then *believe* slaveholding to be right, and may have some show

of reason for his belief. But is it right? That is the great question to be settled. To this I answer,

1. It *may* be wrong, for it is not founded in the nature of things, or the revealed will of God.

(1.) It is not founded in the nature of things. We find nothing in the constitution of one man, indicating that he was intended to be a slave, or of another, that he was intended to be a master. "God has made of one blood all nations of men." The rich and the poor, the black and the white, the master and the slave are endowed with the same mental and corporeal elements of human character. The powers of one may be better cultivated, and therefore larger than those of another, just as one blade of grain may, by its favorable situation, attain to a greater height and size than another; still, every man, no matter what his color or condition, possesses the priceless faculties of humanity, faculties which are destined to expand till they shall exceed the present powers of the noblest angel that bows before the throne of God.

And if there is no foundation laid, in the elementary powers of man, for the relation of master and slave, neither can we find it in the growth of these powers. The faculties of men are variously expanded, ascending with every shade of difference, from the feeble infant and idiot up to those giant minds which, like brilliant stars, shine in the galaxy of literature and science. Now, amidst this diversity of human mind, where shall the line be drawn, dividing the masters from their slaves? Draw it where you will, many a master would wear a colored skin, and many a slave a white one. Many a man who now holds the whip would be obliged to resign it to him over whom it is held, and bow his own back to the stroke. Draw it where you will, many a parent, a husband, a brother would be found on the one side of the line, and the child, the wife, the brother or sister on the other. And, as mind is continually advancing, draw it where you will, the man who is this hour a slave, would the next march over and join the ranks of those with whom is the right to rule. And who should assign to each his place on the scale of mind? None but the omniscient God could perform this work, and he has never written on the forehead of one man, "I have

constituted thee a master," or on that of another, "I have doomed thee a slave."

Is it said that the color of the black man has stamped him the slave of the white? Then are the crow and the American bear clothed in the dress of slavery; while the swan and the polar bear wear the garments of commanding freedom. If color is the badge of condition, then is the black horse branded the slave of the white one. Besides: the complexion of men varies, in an infinite variety of shades, from the white of the driven snow to the black of the beautiful jet. Now, where, in this case, shall the line be drawn, dividing the master from the slave? Draw it where you will, it would convert some of those who are now masters into slaves, and many a slave into a master; for many a man, that now wears the galling chain, stands in a fairer skin than does his self-styled lord. And, draw it where you will, it would run through families, exalting a part to the rank and rights of masters, and degrading others to the condition of slaves. Besides; who shall appoint this committee on colors? Who act upon it? And when appointed, and brought together for action from the four quarters of the world, should it decide that the God of nature has written the white man the slave, and the black the master, intending the paler color to serve, and the deeper and richer to command, who, that allowed color to be the badge of condition, could prove the decision wrong? None: for there is nothing in the nature of colors that constitutes one color rather than another the index of slavery. The system, then, is not founded in nature. Nor is it founded

(2.) In the revealed will of God. No one pretends that there is any definite command in the Bible, requiring one part of the human family to make slaves of the other. If any such command exists, then, non-slaveholding States are awfully criminal for not obeying it. But, whatever other sins these States may be guilty of, they have never yet, and they never will be charged with the sin of refusing to enslave their fellow-men.

Do you say that it is expressly declared in Scripture that Canaan shall be the servant of his brethren? True; but Canaan has been dead these many years. Besides,

it is expressly declared, "The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners," but it is also declared, "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed." And it is expressly declared, (Gen. xv. 13, 14,) "The seed of Abram shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years." But it is also declared, "That nation whom they shall serve will I judge, saith the Lord." And if it is declared "Canaan shall be a servant of servants unto his brethren," it is also declared, (Jer. xxii. 13,) "Woe unto him that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work."

Is it said that God commanded the children of Israel to make servants of those that they took in war? Deut. xx. 10, 11. And so God commanded Abraham to slay his son Isaac. But, would this command exonerate a man from guilt who should now, on the strength of it, slay his son? No more would the permission or command of God to the Israelites to enslave their captives of war, exonerate us from guilt, should we now reduce our fellow-men under the yoke of bondage. If we wait until we receive an express command from God to do it, we shall wait long before we lay the yoke on the neck of any of our brethren. Is it said that the Scriptures no where expressly forbid slavery? Nor do they expressly forbid a man's having a plurality of wives, or abstracting a purse from his neighbor's pocket, or cutting off his mother's head. It is enough that slavery, like these other sins, is forbidden by implication. It is enough for our present purpose, to show that we are nowhere commanded to practise it. For if we are not commanded to practise it, then the system is not founded on the revealed will of God; and we have already shown that it is not founded on the nature of things, and, if based on neither of these, it must rest on the ordinance of man, it must be a creature of his making. And as man is always liable to err and do wrong, he may have done wrong in establishing the system of slavery. Nay, more, as man is naturally selfish, and more frequently does wrong than right, the fact that slavery is the work of man renders it more probable that it is wrong than right. Slavery, then, viewing it only as a work of man, *may* be a sin. Nay, more, *it is probable*, that it is a sin. But, not only *may* it, but

2. It *must* be a sin ; for, (1st.) It is a system founded in selfishness.—It was not commenced for the good of those who are held in bondage, but for the good of those by whom they are held. When slave-ships were first fitted out, and sent to Africa, to steal the negro, and convey him to America, it was not done to benefit the ignorant negro. Had that been the object, the work would have gone slowly onward. But it was done for selfish purposes, to make gain by the trade in human flesh and blood. Those, too, who bought the stolen man, did it, not to instruct and bless him, but to thrive on his unpaid toil. And the legal enactments, by which the system of slavery is created and upheld, cannot be read, without producing the full conviction that they were made by the self-styled master for his own special benefit. And, being a system thus founded in selfishness, it must be sin.

Besides ; the master claims his fellow-men as his property. This claim is the essence of slavery. Relinquish it, and slavery is annihilated at once. Now, the making of such a claim is selfishness, and therefore sin, for it is usurpation. If there be any right with which the God of nature has endowed man, it is a right to himself. Without this previous right to himself, he could have no right to claim anything for himself. Without it he could not claim his fellow-man as his property. It must be allowed, then, that some are endowed with a right to themselves. But this right they must have had from God ; for it must have existed previous to all human governments or laws, it being necessarily presupposed in the very establishment of governments and enactment of laws, and could not therefore have originated in them. It is self-evident that if individuals have no right to themselves, they have no right to make laws for themselves. It belongs to those whose property they are, to legislate for them. If, then, the right to himself has been given to any man by God, (and it could have been derived from no other source) the question arises, has it not been given to all men alike ? Have not all been endowed, by their Creator, with the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness ? To raise such a question in this country, would once have been considered the very acme of folly. But the prevalence of oppres-

sion has even obscured the most self-evident truths. It becomes necessary, therefore, to bring them out, and hold them up to the light of day, so that they may be seen, and read and known of all men. If God has conferred on some men the right to themselves, (and this is abundantly admitted,) has he not been impartial in this all-important gift? Has he not conferred it on all alike? The same train of argumentation which would substantiate the claim of one individual to this gift, would secure the same claim to all. If the evidence of the justice of the claim is found in the laws of nature, these laws are for all men. If it is found in the constitution of man, the same constitution is given to all; if in the Bible, this book is for all; if in the commands of God, these commands are for all. If nature or revelation secure the right to himself, to the master, they secure the same right to the slave. If the constitution of man, as a free moral agent on the commands of God, imply this right in the master, they imply it also in the slave. Not a single mark can be found on the works of God, or a single clause in the statute book of God, which indicates, or teaches, that the impartial Ruler of men has conferred on one man the right to himself, and denied the same right to another. But the evidence is abundant that he has conferred this right on man, as man, and therefore on all men alike. I go not to the works of nature for the proof of this declaration, though enough might be found there, but I rest on the sure testimony of inspiration. To man, to man as a class of beings, and therefore to *all* men, God said, "Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Now the bestowal upon man of the right to exercise dominion over other creatures, necessarily implies the previous bestowal upon him of the right to himself; for it is self-evident that if a man has no right to himself, he can have no right to exercise dominion over others. That right, if he himself belongs to another, necessarily goes with himself to his owner, and he cannot lawfully exercise it without leave first obtained from his owner. But that right is his, by a definite and special grant from the great Proprietor of all things. The right to himself, then, is secured to every man by an instrument given under the hand and seal of

the God of the universe. It is his by a charter from the Ruler of all, and no created being can violently wrest it from him and be guiltless.

Has the so-called slave, then, in any way alienated this right? Has he, by any criminal act, forfeited it to the laws of the State? This no one pretends. Has he sold it? That, in the nature of things, he could not do. Whatever pretended equivalent he might receive for himself, would necessarily go back with himself to his owner; for, whoever owned him, would own all that belonged to him. How, then, could he sell it? And who pretends that he has sold it? Has he, then, voluntarily surrendered it—given it away, of his own accord, to his much-loved master? By no means. He is held in unwilling bondage. How, then, has he lost his right to himself, a right accorded to him by the will and law of Heaven? Why, it has been seized upon by men who act upon the maxim that “might makes right,” and violently wrested from his grasp. His high and indisputable title to it they have utterly disregarded, and, by the aid of superior force, another now tramples him in the dust, and claims the proprietorship of his most sacred and precious right, the right to himself, a right which the God of nature conferred on him for his own special benefit. And if this is not usurpation, pray tell me what usurpation is. And if an act of usurpation like this, which lays violent claim to the dearest right of a fellow-man and contravenes the plain will of Heaven, is not entitled to the name of sin, pray tell me what injury done to man, what affront offered to God, can receive the name.

Again, claiming fellow-men as property is selfishness, and therefore sin, because it is claiming a right to appropriate the proceeds of their unpaid toil to one's own good. The labor in this case is not voluntary, but compelled. No bargain is made between the slaves and their master. No equivalent is paid or promised. The claim of the master is, that he has a right to all the avails of his slaves' labor, returning them only enough to afford them a mere support; and that he has a right to compel them to labor on these hard terms. Now, does not such a claim bear the marks of selfishness on its very front? Can it originate in any thing but selfishness? Is it not an unblush-

ing claim of a right in the master, to appropriate to himself what belongs to others, viz. the avails of their labor, and that too, even in opposition to their wishes? Does not this claim contemplate solely the good of the master? And is it not made by himself? And does it not wholly disregard the wishes and the best good of the slaves? Is not their labor worth more than their mere support? And are not the hands they labor with their own, given them by the Father of all men? And have they not a right to the full value of their labor? And if another violently wrenches it from them and appropriates it to his own private good, must he not, in doing it, be actuated by selfish motives? Does he not love himself better than his brethren?

Again—claiming fellow-men as property is selfishness, and therefore sin, because it is claiming a right to sell human beings, a right to commit all the welfare of those thus sold to another, even though this other be an entire stranger. Now, for whose good is this claim instituted? Who receives the price paid for this transfer? The master. Whose good is then consulted in the transfer? Most certainly the master's; for the slaves are sold to perhaps an entire stranger, and how their interests will be regarded by the stranger he knows nothing, perhaps cares as little. Now can he, from any benevolent motive, claim the right thus to commit, for a pecuniary compensation, the welfare of his brethren, sisters or children, to the mercy of an entire stranger? If these brethren or children are, as he pretends to say, unable to provide for themselves, and are, by the hand of Providence, thrown on his care, can he conscientiously throw off the burden? Can he throw it upon a stranger, who, for aught he knows, may treat them with the utmost neglect or cruelty? Can he be influenced, in doing this, by a regard to their welfare? Does he not avowedly do it for the pecuniary reward? for the price paid him for flesh and blood? paid to himself? Does he not do it without at all taking into consideration their welfare? And if he acts wholly from a regard to his own good, irrespective of theirs, is he not selfish? And must not the claim to a right thus to act, originate in selfishness?

Besides; claiming fellow-men as property is selfishness, and therefore sin, because it is claiming the right to seize

them, if they escape, and reduce them again to bondage. If they are the property of the master, as he has a right to his property wherever it may be, he has a right to seize them wherever they may be, and employ them in his service. If they have stolen his property, (i. e. stolen themselves,) and run away with it, he may evidently reclaim it wherever he finds it. In claiming them as his property, he claims this right, the right to seize them in any place, and reduce them to a state of bondage. They may be prospering in the world, doing well for themselves and others; they may have become husbands or wives in free states, fathers or mothers; he claims the right to take them from their happy homes, drag them as his property from their families, and bow their necks again to his yoke. And for whose good is this claim advanced? Solely for the master's—to secure to himself the use of what he is pleased to call his property. Their welfare, in this claim, is wholly overlooked; nay, it is trampled in the dust. If it were not for his own interest to reclaim his absconding slaves, he would never reclaim them. He would feel under no obligation to do it. In doing it, then, he must be influenced by selfish motives, and his claim to a right to do it must be founded in the spirit of selfishness. A distinguished professor in one of our Theological Seminaries, when maintaining that the slaves “might be brought to believe it best for them, at least for the present, to remain slaves, and that the institution might be made quite an interesting family matter,” said, that “if he were a slaveholder and his slaves should leave his service, he could not reconcile it with his notions of right to *force* them to return to it.” A strange kind of slavery this! A strange right to hold men as property this,—a right which it would not be right to enforce! Abandon the principle that you have a right to pursue and recover your fugitive slaves, and you abandon your claim to them as your property; you abandon the system of slavery; you convert it into a system of voluntary service on the one part, rendered as a compensation for care and support received from the other. It is not the coerced subjection of one to the other, but a tacit agreement between the parties which may at any moment be broken up. Give us such slavery as this,

and we would not lift a voice or a pen against it. Enact and enforce a law in the slaveholding section of our country, forbidding the master to pursue and recover his fugitive slaves, and you disrobe him of his right to them as his property. You cut up the whole system of slavery by the roots. You open a rail-road on which almost the entire slave population would, in one short week, be seen rapidly hastening to freedom. And why is not such a law enacted? The masters supposed self-interest forbids its enactment. In recovering his fugitive slaves, in claiming a right to recover them, (a claim involved in the claim to them as property,) his own good alone is contemplated. And if, in doing these things, he contemplates only his own good, does he not act from selfish motives? Is not his claim to them as his property founded in selfishness? And does not the entire system which rests wholly on this claim, originate in selfishness, the mother of every abomination? Must it not, then, be sin?

That it *must* be sin, is evident (2.) from the evils which naturally result from it. As these evils stand written in large and bloody capitals on every page of the history of slavery, and as they have often been particularized and portrayed before the eyes of the community, I shall confine myself to the bare statement of the two which, in my estimation, stand out most prominently to view, and exhibit the most forbidding aspect. They are those behind which all others find protection. The first is, the entrusting of important irresponsible power in the hands of the master. The system of slavery leaves the person, the character, the chastity, the happiness, I had almost said the life even of the slaves entirely at the disposal of the master. I know there are laws which throw a show of protection around the slaves. It is, however, a mere show; for, if abused, they have no power to complain or testify against their master; and they have no friend who can, or dare do it for them. The laws stand in black and white on the statute book; but they are a dead letter. None can appeal to their aid, none execute their sanctions. Practically, the slaves are wholly out from under the protecting shield of the law. Practically, they are wholly under the arm of their master. Now, considering what man is, the entrusting of so much irresponsible power in the hands of the

master, (to say nothing of the baneful influence it exerts on his own character,) must, necessarily, expose the slaves to every species of insult and injury. We need not examine the horrid details of slavery to determine what, in most cases, their lot must be. Their master is a man; and though here and there a master may be found who treats his slaves with tenderness, such masters must be rare. Knowing, as we do, that the character of man is a compound of avarice and impatience and revenge and violence and tyranny and lust, spiced, even in the best men, with only a scanty sprinkling of benevolence, we know enough to satisfy any reasonable mind that their condition must, generally, be peculiarly deplorable. When we see them left unprotected to the bare mercy of such attributes of character, the common attributes of depraved man, we see enough of what they must certainly suffer to chill the life-blood at our hearts. And is not a system which involves all this suffering a wicked system? Is it not in the sight of heaven and earth a pernicious, a loathsome system?

The other evil, resulting from the system of slavery, to which I would refer, is, the complete reversal of the arrangement of Heaven with respect to the value assigned, and the culture given to the physical, intellectual, social and moral powers of the slaves. The mind of man is what gives him his importance in the scale of being. The Creator has shown his opinion of the superior value of the mind, by making it the lord of the body and of every irrational being and thing. It stands, in his estimate, the first of all his works. But slavery ranks the body before the mind. She values the men who are her victims in proportion to the superiority of their bodies and inferiority of their minds. In forming her estimate of the worth of men, she asks, "Are they strong and healthy?" not "Are they intelligent and moral?" Her maxim is, that muscles make, but mind mars the man. The more physical force the better slave, and the less intelligence the better slave. She sets that last which God has set first. Nay, she boldly declares what God has pronounced his best gift to the slaves, a decided injury to them. And is not this a daring affront offered to God? Does it not shed a flood of evils on the slaves? Does it not encourage the abandonment of mind as worthless, as hurtful; and stimulate only to the

improvement of the body ? And what efforts does slavery make to cultivate the minds of the slaves, those minds on which God intended the chief care should be bestowed ? Let her laws, which punish such efforts with fines and imprisonment and stripes and death, answer the question. In as far as she can do it, she shuts out every ray of knowledge from the soul ; and she leaves the whole field of mind, which might bloom with beauty to cheer and bless the slave, a dark, dreary and desolate waste. Does she not, then, do him a most cruel injury ?

And what facilities does she afford for the expansion of his social affections,—those affections from which in their exercise and growth God intended that he should reap some of his sweetest earthly joys ? Humanity may well blush at the answer that must be given to such a question. The same facilities and only those which are afforded to herds and flocks. She recognizes no family state, no marriage vows, no relations of brother and sister, parent and child. She tramples these precious gifts of God in the dust, and scatters them, as she does the sire, the dam and their brood, to the four winds of heaven. She rends every tender heart-string, and crushes in the bud every growing affection. Better, far better for the slave, to have no social nature, than to have it thus made to him but the instrument of bitter anguish.

And what does Slavery do to expand the moral powers, and fit the *soul* for its future destiny ? The soul, did I say ? The slave have a soul ? A being whose whole value consists in the goodness of his body, have an immortal soul ? The idea is preposterous, and she cannot, she will not, admit it. If he has a soul, (a fact which she practically denies, but which God solemnly affirms) she utterly overlooks his soul. She excludes from it the light of heaven and eternity. Clothed, herself, in the garb of religion, she denies him the Bible and the cheering hopes and consolations of the Bible, when none more than he can need them. She makes his life and death the life and death of the beast that perishes. She thus contravenes the plain will of God, and does the slave an unspeakable, irreparable wrong.

In presenting these two giant evils as evidence that

slavery is a sin, I turn away entirely from all those festering excrescences which render the system so revolting to the sight, and look only at the native form and appearance of the monster. I look only at what, from her very nature, she must necessarily be. And I find here enough to convince any thinking mind that she is, and must be, the mother of every abomination. I find enough to stamp her with the deepest infamy. Does she not undo the work of Heaven? Does she not take the beings whom their Creator has endowed with the high powers of free moral agency, and thus fitted and designed to be the voluntary artificers of their own present and eternal welfare, and the co-workers with (not the slaves to) him in his projects of good to a world—does she not take these noble beings, disrobe them of all their lofty attributes of character, and convert them into mere machines of sinew and bone, fit only to minister to her own selfish and sensual wishes? Does she not abandon them to the tenderness of all the lewd and ferocious passions of human nature? Does she not disannul the high purpose of Heaven in forming them men, which was to bless them with the light of knowledge, the joys of social affection and the hopes of religion? Does she not, by legal enactments, debar them from the cheering pleasures of a cultivated mind, the rich bliss of an uninvaded family, the perfect and beatifying consolations of the gospel, pressing them on through a dark, rugged and thorny earthly course, and, at death, launching them into eternity, without the knowledge of God, or the hope of heaven? Does she not, then, perpetrate the worst of crimes? Does she not commit the grossest outrage on human nature? Does she not offer the most shameful insult to the God of men? Is she not, then, I do not say guilty,—is she not a monster of depravity?

II. The system of slavery very intimately concerns the inhabitants of non-slaveholding States. It was a noble sentiment of a Latin writer "*Homo sum,*" &c. "I am a man, and therefore feel an interest in whatever concerns a fellow-man." Adopting this sentiment, we may say, The Southerners are men, the slaves are men, and as slavery concerns them, it concerns us also. Besides; slavery is a sin. And wherever sin exists, we have a

work to do. When we witness it in a brother, we are not at liberty to feel unconcerned or remain inactive. The command of God, "Thou shalt in anywise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him," rests upon us, and we cannot disregard it and be guiltless. Slavery pours too a tide of misery over its unhappy victims. And wherever a groan is expressed from a human bosom, or a tear from a human eye, there a call is made upon our alleviating efforts and sympathies. If we have the hearts of men, if we have the spirit of Christians, we shall feel an interest in a suffering fellow-man, wherever be his abode, whatever be his color, or condition, or character. If his happiness is invaded, if his dearest rights are wrested from him by the hand of violence, we cannot love him as ourselves and yet remain uninterested and idle spectators of the wrong he suffers. Slavery is also an insult to God. And, if we love him supremely, can we see him insulted, and yet feel no concern? Can we see contempt poured on his character and government, and yet feel no desire, and make no effort to wipe it off? But, besides the concern which we have with this evil, as men and Christians, we have also an interest in it, as inhabitants of the country in which it is found. It exists in our own nation, a nation whose various sections and States are bound together by numberless strong and active ties. We are closely connected by every political, commercial, and social relation, and whatever interests one part of the country must necessarily interest the other also. Such a system as that of American slavery, a system which affects so deeply the character, condition and prospects of the South, cannot exist there without exerting an influence, and exciting an interest in non-slaveholding States. But in order more specifically to answer the oft-repeated question, "What have we at the North to do with Slavery?" we will turn our attention to some of the particulars in which the system injuriously affects our interests.

1. It lessens our wealth. Let slavery be abolished and not only [would the value of land at the South be greatly enhanced,* but its productiveness would also be greatly

* Mr. Morris of Ohio, in his speech in the U. S. Senate said, I can see from the window of my upper chamber in the city of Cincinnati, lands in

improved. Let the slave become a free man, let him voluntarily cultivate the ground, let him find it for his interest to render it productive, and he would put forth his best efforts to increase its resources and draw forth its treasures. He would then have a spur to exertion, and its influence would be seen in the improvement of the ground and enlargement of the crops. A southern planter once remarked that he never found his land so productive as he did after giving his slaves all the liberty the laws of the State would admit, and leaving it entirely to their management. Now, with the increase of the southern crop, the exports and imports of the country would be increased; and the public revenues would be increased also. Thus a part of the burden of supporting the general government which we now bear, would be borne by the South. And the amount of the surplus revenue, if there were such a surplus, would be augmented, and our part of it enlarged. The wealth of the non-slaveholding States is probably from this source diminished yearly to the amount of hundreds of thousands, and even millions of dollars.*

Nor is this all. The North is a manufacturing community. Give the slaves their freedom, and they would expend in the purchase of our manufactures, for the use of themselves and families, five dollars where their masters spend for them one. They would feel an honorable pride in having the members of their households comfortably and neatly clad. This is already found to be one of the effects of freedom in the British West India islands. And if the slaves at the South were set at liberty, the effect there would be the same. The wants which as freemen they would feel, and which by their efforts they would be

Kentucky, which, I am told, can be purchased from \$10 to \$50 per acre; while lands of the same quality, and under the same improvements, and at the same distance from me in Ohio would probably sell from \$100 to \$500 per acre.

* Our imports, and of course our customs are nearly proportioned to our exports. About two thirds of our exports consist of southern products. Now, if only one half our customs arise from imposts on articles received in exchange for these products, the revenue from this source would average \$10,000,000 a year. And if these products were increased one third, (and were free substituted for slave labor, no doubt they would be increased much more than this) our yearly revenue would be increased more than \$3,000,000.

able to supply, would create an increased yearly demand for our manufactures to the value of millions of dollars. The entire profits on this increased consumption of our manufactures is now lost to our citizens.

Besides; the system of slavery has already involved this nation in one war, and continually exposes us to others. The unjust and cruel war, which has been for a few years past, waged against the Indians of Florida, had its origin in slavery. The circumstances were these: "A female slave, a number of years ago, escaped from Georgia into Florida, and was married by an Indian. In process of time the daughter of this pair became the wife of Ocoola, the far-famed Indian Chief. The proprietor of the fugitive, or a person holding his claim, after her death, ascertained that the wife of Ocoola was her daughter, in person, or by proxy, seized her in an unguarded moment, dragged her into Georgia, and made her a slave. The great, and greatly injured son of the forest resolved on revenge, and, pursuing the kidnapper, availed himself of an opportunity to shoot him through the heart." A cry was at once raised against the unhappy Indians, and the blood-hounds of war let loose upon them. And thus commenced an exterminating warfare, which, besides the misery it has occasioned, and the lives it has sacrificed (and northern officers and privates have been dragged to the South, to be shot down by Indian rifles or sicken and die in Florida marshes) has already cost our government an amount of money, equal to nearly two dollars for every man, woman and child in the country. A fair proportion of this money has come out of northern purses. Have we then nothing to do with a system which, within a few years past, has put its hand into our pockets, and abstracted from the purse of every citizen with a family of six, nearly twelve dollars, to meet a single item of its expenditures? But for this war, from ten to fifteen millions of surplus revenue might now be divided among the ^{the} slaveholding States. And have we nothing to do with a system which filches from us our money by millions?

Besides; the South is constantly exposed to a servile war. And should one arise, its expenses must be borne by the general government, and the larger half would come from

the purses of northern freemen. And is it right that we should be compelled to take this risk without receiving, for doing it, the least compensation? Can we afford to ensure the leaky and clumsy vessel of slavery against all the dangers of war for nothing? Can we do it, and feel no interest in her?

2. The system of slavery increases our war services. When a war arises, men must be had to carry it forward; and these men must come from that section of the country which can best spare them. But the main force of the South is needed there to awe and keep in subjection her own slaves. She can supply but comparatively little aid to the general government. The chief burden of defending the country must, therefore, fall upon the inhabitants of the non-slaveholding States. They must supply the men, their fathers and brothers and sons must be the men to repel invasion and protect the country*. But, abolish the system of slavery, and then the whites at the South are at liberty to come at her country's call, and aid in defending her honor and rights. And the emancipated slaves, too, might, on any pressing emergency take up arms in the defence of the country. In 1796, the French government of St. Domingo, by converting her slaves into freemen and enlisting them in the service, prevented the island from falling into the hands of the English. And our slaves at the South, if free, would become a reserved force which might, should necessity require, be called into action. But now they are an enemy in our camp.† And let a hostile force land at the South, with arms for the slaves, and they would flock by thousands to the standard of the enemy, and turn all their furious energies against their oppressors.‡ The North

* The number of regulars furnished to the Revolutionary army was, by New-England, 147,441; by the Middle States, 56,571; and by the Southern States, 56,997. Of these, South Carolina supplied 9,447, and Massachusetts 67,207; Georgia 2,297; and Connecticut 31,939.

† During the Revolutionary war, S. Carolina lost 25,000 negroes, at least a fifth part of all the slaves in the State at the beginning of the war. When the British evacuated Charleston S. C. Governor Matthews demanded the restoration of some thousands of negroes who were within their lines.—*Ramsay's History of South Carolina*.

‡ The late Judge Tucker, of Virginia, once said, "Whenever we are involved in war, if our enemies hold out the lure of freedom, they will have in every negro a decided friend."

would thus have devolved upon her the double work of repelling the enemy, and subjugating the slave. And if the system of slavery thus weakens the strength of the nation, and throws the main burden of its defence on the men of the North, have we no concern with the system?

3. It diminishes our political influence. It is well known that the number of representatives which each State of the Union is entitled to send to Congress depends upon the number of its inhabitants. The number of inhabitants which entitles to one representative, as that number was fixed by Congress in 1832, is 47,700. Now, by the provisions of the national Constitution, five slaves are, in making out the population which is to be the basis of representation, accounted equal to three freemen. And as five slaves would not, on an average, be valued at more than \$3,000, (Senator Clay's valuation is \$2,000,) a thousand dollars in slave property has as much influence in electing a representative to Congress as the vote of a freeman at the North. Thus a southern planter with a property in slaves to the amount of \$50,000 and with a family of six whites including himself, would have more power at the ballot-box in choosing a representative to Congress, and would of course wield more influence on the floor of Congress, than would nine men with the same families and the same amount of property in non-slaveholding States. It would require 7950 such northern families, and only 850 such southern ones to elect a representative to Congress. The slaveholding States now elect 24 representatives on the basis of their slave property alone, while northern property is wholly unrepresented. And these 24 representatives employ their power in stifling the right of petition, and preventing the voice of the freemen of the North from being heard in the Halls of Congress, and in electing slaveholding Speakers of the house, which they have done for 25 out of the last 27 years. The effect is the same in the choice of our President. The slave property of the South entitles her to 24 Presidential Electors. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts contains 50,000 more free inhabitants than the two States of South Carolina and Georgia together; and yet these two southern States elect 24 Presidential Electors, and Massachusetts

only 14. From the operation of this principle it has come to pass, that for ten out of twelve Presidential terms, the highest office in the gift of the nation has been entrusted to slaveholders. Have we, then, nothing to do with a system which so materially diminishes our comparative political power, and which puts into the hands of slaveholders so much influence in our national councils—an influence which they may use, and have used to the serious detriment of northern interests?

4. It interrupts our social intercourse. The wings of our general government are spread out over a vast extent of territory. And under their protection every citizen ought to have the privilege of passing, in perfect security, from one corner of the country to the other; and, of expressing, in a becoming manner, wherever he might be, the honest convictions of his understanding. In the non-slaveholding States he does have this privilege. The southerner may travel through these States, from East to West, and from North to South, and defend, with all the powers of logic he can command, his own peculiar institutions. He may attack, by conversation, by lectures, by writing, our benevolent societies, our banking corporations, our manufacturing establishments, our commercial interests, and do it with a sense of perfect security. We should say to him, "Go on, Sir, we profess to be reasonable men, and if you will convince us that our institutions are injurious and wicked, we will abandon them and adopt your own. But, we believe them too firmly founded in truth and equity for all your sophistry to move them a hair-breadth from their rocky basis. Still go on, Sir, and when you have fully satisfied our judgment that we are wrong, we will change our course. But, till you have fairly done this, we shall claim the privilege and the right of preferring our own to southern institutions." But does a freeman of the North enjoy this same liberty at the South? Why, free colored persons cannot go to the South. "By the laws of southern States it is provided that any colored persons who may go into those States, shall be presumed to be runaway slaves, thrown into prison; and if they cannot prove their freedom, they shall be sold at public auction to pay jail fees. Under the operation of these laws, many

free citizens of this Commonwealth have been imprisoned and sold into slavery. By the laws of several of the southern States it is provided, that, "whenever any colored person shall be found on board any vessel coming into any ports of those States," (he may be a cook or mariner, belonging to the vessel, or even the owner of the vessel) "he shall be forthwith taken by the proper officers, and lodged in jail for safe keeping until the departure of the vessel to which he may belong." And this is often done to the great inconvenience, and pecuniary detriment of northern shipmasters and owners. And when a gentleman of the North travelling southward with his family, stops for a time in some southern city, though it be but for a single day, if he has a hired colored girl with him, to wait on his wife, or tend his little children, he must submit to have that girl taken from him, by form of law, and immured in prison; he must be deprived of her services, which no stranger can perform so well as she, and then, when ready to leave the place, he may have the privilege of taking his hired girl with him, by paying the court and jail expenses. He may go in peace, if he has said nothing, and been suspected of thinking nothing in disparagement of that peculiar southern institution, for the protection of which he has been subjected to so gross an indignity and wrong. But, if he has dared to use the prerogative of a freeman, and open his mouth in defence of his rights, and in favor of liberty, *the* chivalrous South will, without the compulsion or form of ~~the~~ law, generously provide him with a coat of feathers and tar, a halter, and the grave of a dog. Through the mouth of her chief men in Congress she has pledged her honor that she will nobly do all this for any northern gentleman who will come down to her, and, as a freeman, express his disapprobation of her system of bondage. And she has been prompt to redeem her pledge. In doing it, however, she has not very scrupulously examined the real character of the objects of her benevolent regard. True, she has sometimes found the abolitionist within her consecrated borders, and faithfully bestowed on him the boon she promised. But suspicion has sometimes rested on those who have had no part or lot with the "*fanatics*," (and the fact that a stranger is a northern man, is enough to beget

suspicion) and she has taken such men, and generously given them a full cup of corporeal indignity and abuse.

But, besides personal intercourse, the sacred right of intercourse by the pen has been invaded. Our mail-bags have been searched in southern post offices, our private letters broken open and read, and our periodical publications taken and destroyed, under pretence of searching for seditious and inflammatory correspondence and papers. The man at the North, who transmits by mail a letter, (containing perhaps the most private intelligence respecting his family or business,) to his friend, brother or child at the South, has no guarantee that his letter will not be opened and read at a dozen southern post offices before it reaches the place of its destination.

Our commercial intercourse too has been invaded. "By the laws of southern States it is provided, that in case a slave be found concealed on board a vessel, in any port of those States, after said vessel shall have weighed anchor to sail from said port, the captain and crew of said vessel shall be seized, and if it can be proved that any of them were privy to the secreting of the slave, they shall be put to death. And in case the slave secreted himself without the knowledge of the captain, the captain shall pay a fine of \$500, and be imprisoned not less than two years. Under the operation of this law worthy citizens of this Commonwealth have been seized, and imprisoned and fined." And this is southern high-minded justice and honor,—to oppress her slave till he makes a desperate effort for freedom, by concealing himself, perhaps unknown to the captain or crew, in a northern vessel, and then, by law, fine and imprison the innocent and unsuspecting captain for the act of her own slave. And must not such things as these interrupt the intercourse between the North and South? And while they exist, as the legitimate fruit of the system of slavery, are we to be told that we have nothing to do with the system?

5. It disturbs our peace. The inhabitants of non-slaveholding States are generally disposed to be quiet and civil. They need very powerful stimulants to excite them to acts of lawless violence. But these stimulants slavery has, of late years, very abundantly supplied. She has used every

expedient with northern men, and appealed to every passion to prevent the calm and candid discussion of the subject of slavery at the North. She has done her utmost to keep the inhabitants of the North in ignorance of the real character of the system of slavery, and the miserable condition of the slaves. She has denounced all the efforts which have been made, and are making, for the redemption of the slaves, not only as fanaticism and folly, but also as direct and open hostility to the welfare of the South. By the southern machinery which has been employed at the North, a high excitement against these philanthropic efforts has been produced. Many individuals, through interested motives, have taken a part in creating and augmenting this excitement. Some have been led to engage in this work by the influence of those who have had an interest in sustaining the institutions of slavery. And others still, sincerely supposing the South to be the attacked and aggrieved party, have been induced, from an honorable though mistaken sense of duty to the South, to lend the excitement a negative, if not a positive countenance and aid. And what a state of anarchy this excitement has occasioned in many places long characterized by habits of good order and sober sense, may be learnt by recurring to the history of the four years past, as that history stands recorded on the pages of our daily and weekly newspapers. Peaceable assemblies of our citizens have been disturbed and broken up. The windows, doors, &c. of the houses and halls in which these assemblies were held, have been injured, and sometimes the buildings themselves pulled or burnt to the ground. Printing offices and printing presses, from which anti-slavery newspapers and other periodicals were issued, have been again and again demolished. Worthy and respectable lecturers and editors have been insulted and abused and beaten, and in one case even murdered. And all this has been done while the civil law which should throw her protecting ægis over the property and person of even the meanest of our citizens, has stood fettered and trembling by ; and her hated rivals, Lynch law and mob law have reigned triumphant. The anti-slavery movements may have afforded the *occasion* for these popular out-breakings of tumult and vio-

lence. And so the preaching of Christianity afforded the *occasion* for those bloody persecutions, which, during the three or four first centuries of the Christian era raged so violently throughout the Roman empire. But it was the wicked system of heathen idolatry which *caused* those inhuman persecutions. And it was the wicked system of slavery which *caused* these unjust outbreakings of popular frenzy. This system has, ever since we became a nation, more or less disturbed the peace of the North, though not to the extent that it has done for a few years past. And we may expect that it will continue to disturb us, till it is thoroughly rooted out of the land. Have we, then, no concern with the system?

6. It injures our reputation. Every one prizes his good character as one of his choicest jewels. But the system of slavery has led southern men to hold the northern character in low estimation. We are, in fact, and we are generally accounted by them to be, working men. And working men, wherever they may be, are by them put upon very nearly the same level. They are all made to rank with their own slaves. In fact, the different classes of working men at the North, (and these compose the bone and sinew of our community,) have, by southerners, been often termed northern slaves. And can we look with the least complacency upon a system which thus degrades the character of the great body of northern men. But this is not all. The North and South compose one nation. And whatever practice prevails, whatever system exists in any one section of the country, gives a character to the whole nation. In the view of other nations we are stigmatized as a nation of slaveholders. The stigma is fastened on the *whole* nation, and we at the North, whether we deserve it or not, still must wear it. And, sensitive as we are of our country's honor, we must feel the disgrace which slavery thus enstamps upon us. In almost every civilized land slavery is now deemed the foulest outrage on humanity. In the opinion of other nations, it brands us as a nation of hypocrites. We are resembled, by caricatures which may, at any time, be bought in European bookstores, to a man holding the lash over the bleeding back of the crouching

slave, and at the same time shouting "Oh glorious liberty." And all this bitter contempt the North must share with the South. Nor does she seem at all anxious to escape it. She introduces the ministers of foreign courts to the District of Columbia, where the system of slavery exists in all its horrors. She compels them to hear the voice and hammer of the slave auctioneer. She compels them to behold whole gangs of chained and hand-cuffed slaves, driven, like cattle, through the streets of Washington. And what can she expect, but that these foreign ministers and the nations they represent, utterly loathing, as they do, the whole system of slavery, will regard, with the most withering scorn, a nation which holds its annual congress in the very midst of such abominations. We owe it to our own credit with foreign nations, we owe it to the ambassadors of foreign courts residing in Washington, whose feelings are every day outraged by exhibitions before their eyes of the horrors of slavery, at once to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, or remove the seat of government to a non-slaveholding State. And have we nothing to do with a system which in the sight of the whole civilized world tramples our national character in the mire, and besmears it with foul pollution?

7. It harasses our feelings. The exhibitions of slavery are all painful to the feelings of humanity. And yet these exhibitions we are sometimes obliged and constantly exposed to witness. We ought to enjoy the privilege of passing through the length and breadth of our common country, without being made the unwilling spectators of an object so abhorrent to the best feelings of human nature, as is the system of American slavery. And yet we cannot travel through the southern section of our country, without being forced to contemplate it in some of its revolting aspects. Some of its most odious features may be, will be sedulously concealed from view. Still, we *must* see man, the image of God, stripped, by the hand of violence, of his humanity, and doomed like a beast to involuntary bondage and toil—a sight which will deeply affect a heart in which lingers a single spark of justice or pity.

And we cannot visit our seat of government without being compelled to witness the revolting spectacle of human

beings converted, by the transforming power of law, into mere cattle. Such spectacles the South have no right to impose on freemen of the North. If she will have her dark system of depravity, let her confine it within the bounds of her own territories. Let her hide it, as much as possible, from the pitying eye of freedom in her own rice swamps and cane and cotton fields. Let her not take it, ulcerous as it is, to its very heart, and bring it up, and lay it down on a section of our country which belongs as much to the North as to herself, to fester there, and pollute the air which the sons of liberty must breathe; and insult the eyes, and harrow up the sympathizing feelings of the North, and of the entire civilized world. Besides; while slavery exists, and our constitution continues in its present form, we are liable to be called upon to deliver up into the Moloch hands of Slavery, the victims of her cruelty, who have fled for refuge to the free States. We must tear them, when just exulting in the thoughts of freedom, from our altars of liberty, which ought to give a sacred protection to the fugitive from oppression. We must bind again around their scarred limbs the corroding chain of slavery, and deliver them, trembling and weeping, into the outstretched and grasping hands of their incensed masters. And can we do this without having our sympathies grossly outraged? Can we do it without bitterly feeling that we are made the unwilling instruments of other men's injustice and cruelty? Nor is this all. The sound of the driver's lash, and the groans of the stricken slave will be borne up to us on the gales of the South. Occasional scenes of barbarity will be enacted there, (would to Heaven they were far less frequent than they are,) the report of which will enter our ears and make them tingle. And the loud lamentations of the colored widow and her fatherless babes, whose husband and father has been kidnapped by the satellites of slavery, will, now and then, be heard by us, even in our borders. Our ears may well be pained, our hearts may well sicken "with every day's report of wrong and outrage" with which this odious system teems. Can it, then, be said that we have nothing to do with the system?

8. It contaminates our morals. Wherever it prevails it must necessarily impair the sense of justice. Wherever it prevails injustice prevails; and injustice towards man is impiety towards God. And let one immorality into the heart, and a door is opened through which every other may enter. Let a man be in the daily practice of oppression and injustice, and he will soon be prepared to trample in the dust every command of the decalogue, to reject the Bible, and even deny the existence of a righteous God. Has not the system of slavery already, in many parts of the South, accomplished, to a considerable extent, this fatal work? Do not multitudes, in the South, almost entirely disregard the rights both of man and God, whenever they are supposed to come in competition with their own selfish interests? Do they not set up the world and pleasure and gain as gods, which they worship instead of the Most High? Is not the language of profanity very familiar to their lips? Is not the Sabbath, which God has commanded them to keep holy, converted into a day in which they "seek pleasure and exact all their labors?" Are not the lives of their fellow-men most shamefully trifled with? Is not the seventh commandment regarded as a dead letter? Do not open infidelity and practical atheism prevail to a most alarming extent? And can these things exist in one section of our country and not affect the other also? Is not a constant intercourse maintained between the North and South? Will not those who come from the South, to reside with us, bring with them their own code of morality, (perhaps I should say of immorality,) and stain and deteriorate the fairer morals of the North? And must not our sons and brothers, who go down to the South, be something more than human, if they pass uncontaminated through the moral pollutions with which they must be constantly surrounded? All these pollutions are the native offspring of slavery. And they will gradually find their way to the North, and eat up our morals and religion. Is slavery, then, no concern of ours?

9. It involves us in sin. In the guilt of the system we must, to some extent, participate. It is interwoven with the whole frame-work of our constitution and government. Many of the acts of Congress are passed for the special

purpose of sustaining slavery. Since the adoption of our Federal Constitution we have added seven slave states to the Union; bought Louisiana for \$15,000,000, to enlarge the slave market; and Florida for \$5,000,000, to prevent slaves from finding an asylum there, which they could do when it was in the hands of monarchical Spain; made the direct tax a *lien* on slaves, and authorized the U. S. Collector to seize and sell them, and if sold for less than the debt, to purchase them in behalf of the United States. We have stifled in Congress the voice of compassion which has been raised in favor of the enslaved. We have seized the free-born wife of an Indian Chief and dragged her into slavery.* We have removed the seat of government from a free to a slave state. We sustain the system in the District of Columbia over which our Congress holds unlimited control. We have prostituted the prisons in the ten mile District, erected and supported by our money, to the purposes of slavery, making them places of confinement for the slave. And we have sustained the domestic slave-trade, and with northern vessels we now drive this trade coastwise to our southern ports;—a trade which, more than any one thing else, tends to strengthen and perpetuate the system of slavery, and which we have the power, through Congress, to abolish at any moment. Are not we, then, involved in the guilt of slavery? Is not the blood of the slave dripping from our fingers and crimsoning our garments? Have we, then, nothing to do with the system?

10. It exposes us to the judgments of Heaven. It is a general principle in the divine administration to punish nations for the guilty conduct of their rulers. And if this will apply in nations where office is hereditary, how much more in those where it is elective. In Republican countries, where offices are held by the vote and at the will of the people, the people do in effect say of all the official acts of their public servants, "Let the guilt of them be on us and on our children." These acts are, to all intents and purposes, the acts of the people; and it is but justice that they should answer for them. And as our nation

* The party which kidnapped the wife of Oceola was commanded by General Thompson, our government agent, and the nation, which appointed and sustained him, must bear his sin.

does, by the public acts of her rulers, extend, confirm, and sanction the foul system of slavery, will not God for all these things visit us in judgment? A statesman and philosopher, who will probably never be charged with bigotry or superstition, (I mean the sagacious Jefferson,) once said, in reference to the subject of slavery, "I tremble for my country, when I reflect that God is just." This able politician had learnt, from the fate of nations, a fact, which every humble Christian has learnt from the Bible, namely, that awful judgments await a guilty land. The mere politician wholly overlooks this fact. He sees only the political wheels and bands in the movement of which the direct agency of man is concerned. The machinery which he eyes, though propelled and held together by the vilest powers, may seem to his narrow vision to be working out the desired result, and he may rejoice in bright anticipations of future success. But he forgets the sure word of God, that the triumphing of the wicked is short. He sees not the hand which is silently at work behind the machinery, taking out a pin here, and stopping a wheel there, and preparing the whole for ultimate destruction. It is only the government which is based on the broad principles of truth and equity, that will be firm and lasting. Every one that is built on injustice and blood, no matter how strong and beautiful it may appear, will be overthrown. And is not our government polluted with the tears and sweat, and stained with the blood of the slave? And will not God be avenged on such a nation as this? At the present time we seem to be, as a nation, directing our thoughts towards our great and crying sin. We resemble a man on the bed of death, who has been led to contemplate the interests of eternity. We have a little space given us for repentance and reformation. If we cleanse ourselves from the pollution and blood which slavery has fastened upon us; if we thoroughly wash our hands of the foul system; if we make haste to break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free, we may yet be saved. But, if we will not do this, then, just as surely as there is a God of truth and justice on the throne of the universe, an hour of retribution to this nation is rapidly approaching,—a terrible hour—for which "vengeance is" even now "bending her bow."

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